

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 7, 2020

H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP
Foreign Minister of Bangladesh
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Segunbagicha, Dhaka 1000
Bangladesh

Dear Minister Momen:

We extend our appreciation to the government and people of Bangladesh for hosting nearly a million Rohingya refugees for more than three years. We recognize that both the root of this crisis and its solution lie in Burma, and the Burmese government must do more to enable the safe, sustainable, and dignified return of Rohingya refugees back to their homes in Burma.

We also appreciate your government's willingness to engage with us on issues related to the Rohingya and are pleased that your government restored 3G and 4G telecommunications networks in the camps at the end of August. This was an important step in protecting people's right to access information and further supporting humanitarian actors' ability to effectively address the ongoing needs of refugees and host communities alike, especially in the midst of a global pandemic.

As countries worldwide determine the best way to provide for their citizens' safety during the pandemic, we understand the need to ensure the health and safety of those residing in Cox's Bazar. But we are concerned by reports that 3G and 4G access has once again been restricted in the camps and by reports that your government has completed fencing around the Kutupalong camps. Telecommunications restrictions hinder humanitarian actors' ability to communicate life-saving information amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, and barricades impede refugees' ability to access humanitarian services or to evacuate in an emergency. We urge your government to restore telecommunications access in the camps to post-August 2020 levels, and to ensure that any security measures implemented are proportional to security concerns and do not infringe on the rights of the Rohingya or host communities.

H.E. Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen, MP
December 7, 2020
Page Two

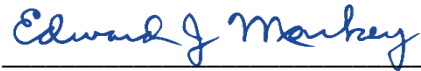
As Members of Congress have stressed before, we remain troubled by the relocation of refugees to Bhasan Char before the UN Refugee Agency has conducted a comprehensive assessment and determined the island is safe and habitable. We welcome your government's commitment that any relocation of refugees would need to be fully informed and voluntary, and ask that any relocated refugee have the option and ability to safely return to Cox's Bazar.

We will continue to hold members of the Burmese military accountable for the crimes they committed, and to support political efforts that lead to a durable resolution of the conflict and enable the safe, dignified, and sustainable return of the Rohingya refugees to Burma. We also remain committed to working with and supporting your government and the people of Bangladesh.

Sincerely,



ELIOT L. ENGEL
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



EDWARD J. MARKEY
Ranking Member
Senate Subcommittee on East Asia,
the Pacific, and International
Cybersecurity Policy



AMI BERA, M.D.
Chairman
House Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific,
and Nonproliferation



ANDY LEVIN
Member of Congress